MUSEUM

Monograph

by

CHARLES M. FFOULKE

on

The Judith & Holofernes Series

consisting of

Eight Flemish Tapestries

with

Original Borders

WASHINGTON
1907

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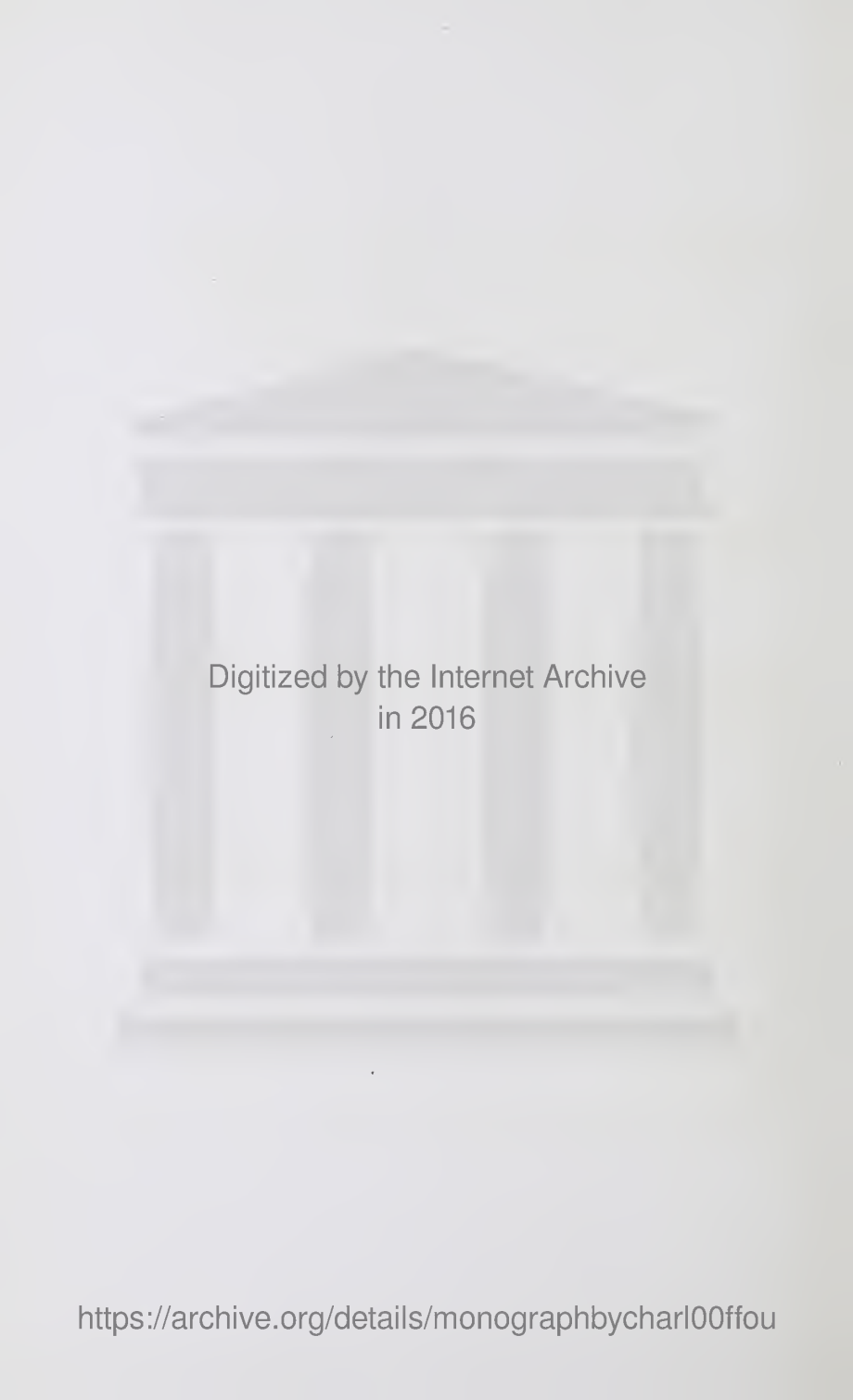
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TRANSLATION OF LATIN INSCRIPTION WOVEN IN TOP BORDER OF EACH TAPESTRY, AND SIZE OF EACH TAPESTRY

FIRST.

King Nebuchadnezzar sends Holofernes, the Chief Captain of his army, against Israel.

Height 13 ft., 9 in. Width 12 ft., 3 in.

SECOND.

Achior, the leader of the Ammonites, while expounding the power of the God of Israel, is arrested by order of Holofernes.

Height 13 ft., 3 in. Width 13 ft., 9 in.

THIRD.

The widow, Judith, weighed the virtues and the vices of the people; when the latter are the heavier, Israel is punished.

Height 13 ft., 10 in. Width 16 ft., 3 in.

FOURTH.

The most beautiful Judith arrays herself in garments of gladness, in order that she may free Bethulia from destruction.

Height 13 ft., 4 in. Width 12 ft., 1 in.

FIFTH.

Judith, in the guise of a fugitive, cunningly deceives Holofernes, and promises him a specious victory.

Height 13 ft., 9 in. Width 13 ft., 3 in.

SIXTH.

Holofernes, while drunken, is deprived of his head by Judith, who thus saves Israel.

Height 13 ft., 6 in. Width 15 ft., 2 in.

SEVENTH.

Judith, victress, displays the head of Holofernes, to the people, who praise the God of Israel.

Height 13 ft., 5 in. Width 17 ft., 8 in.

EIGHTH.

The God of Israel routs the army of Holofernes, and treasures are given to Judith.

Height 13 ft., 6 in. Width 19 ft., 7 in.

Average height 13 ft. 6½ inches. Total of all widths, 120 feet.

ORIGIN, HISTORY AND ARTISTIC IMPORTANCE

These eight Flemish tapestries were woven during the last half of the seventeenth century in Brussels-Brabant as is proven by the mark B B, hereafter explained in the description of the borders, and by the signatures of E. Leyniers and H. Rydams. They possess the remarkable historic distinction of having belonged for about two hundred and fifty years to the great patrician family—the Barberini of Rome—of which Pope Urban VIII was the most prominent member, and of having been included in the inventory of the tapestry possessions of Cardinal Carlo Barberini in 1695.

In Vol. XLVIII of the manuscripts, still preserved in the Barberini Library in Rome, there is an inventory of the tapestries owned by the nephew of Pope Urban VIII, the Cardinal Carlo Barberini, dated October 25, 1695.

In this inventory the series Judith and Holofernes is designated as follows:

"Series woven in silk and wool, representing the history of Judith—eight tapestries."

They passed from the Barberini collection into the Ffoulke collection in 1889.

As evidence of their artistic value and importance, the writer translates what J. J. Guiffrey, the present Director General of the Gobelins, writes on pages 272-

275 of his "Histoire de la tapisserie depuis le moyen age jusqu'a nos jours," concerning the Leyniers and Rydams, families of tapestry weavers and dyers.

"The Leyniers family ranked with the greatest in Flanders, both in the number and ability of the tapestry artists it produced. The following is a list of the principal members of this dynasty: Gaspard, born in 1576, died in 1649, was one of the most diligent tapestry weavers of his time, and brother of Daniel Leyniers, of whom mention has already been made; Everard, son of Gaspard, born in 1597 and died in 1680, 'covered with glory,' continued in his career until he had attained his eightieth year. In a competitive exposition held in 1650 by the best weavers in Flanders, Everard was awarded the highest medal over all his rivals.* Urbain, son of Gaspard, was one of the most celebrated dyers of his time. He preserved and employed the secrets of his father in coloring the wools.

"The excellence of his dyes brought to Gaspard the second, in 1672, the title of 'Dyer to the Governor of the Netherlands,' and the exclusive monopoly of dyeing all the wools used in all the ateliers of Brussels-Brabant. Everard had three sons—John, Daniel and Giles —all of whom followed the career of their father. John, whose reputation eclipsed those of his brothers, wove a series of tapestries illustrating the history of Meleager and Atalanta, after cartoons by Le Brun, for Monsieur the brother of Louis XIV."

Mr. Guiffrey writes much more and in the most flattering terms of the skill and talents of this family, but enough has been translated to substantiate its ex-

*This Everard Leyniers was the author and signer of one-half of this series Judith and Holofernes.

ceptionally high position in the tapestry world. On page 275 of the work heretofore named Mr. Guiffrey tells us that "Henry Rydams began his career as a tapestry weaver in 1629, and was succeeded in 1671 by his son, who bore the same name as his father. * * * The descendants of the Rydams, allied with the descendants of the Leyniers, preserved their united ateliers until the middle of the eighteenth century."

After reciting some of the remarkable series woven by the Leyniers and Rydams families, Mr. Guiffrey adds, "that there are some series which bear the names of both of these celebrated families."

The eight Judith and Holofernes tapestries which are the subject of this monograph form one of these rare series, as the name of Henry Rydams is woven in the blue band at the bottom of one-half of them, and that of Everard Leyniers in the blue band at the bottom of the other half.

M. Wauters in his "Tapisseries Bruxelloises" states that the Leyniers family were tapestry weavers for nearly 250 years from the beginning of the XVI century to the middle of the XVIII, and that both Everard Leyniers and Henry Rydams were doyens of the Brussels tapestry guild.

The Barberini tapestries were all rated as antique works of art by the experts of the Italian Government and those of the Royal Galleries of Uffizi, when application was made to export them from Rome and Italy. The Italian Minister of Public Instruction affixed his official seal to each tapestry as evidence that the Government had consented to its exportation, and that the export tax on it as an antique work of art had been paid. On account of the clamor caused by the loss of the Bar-

berini collection of tapestries to Italy, the American purchaser had them examined by the experts of the Royal Galleries of the Uffizi at Florence who affixed the seal of the Galleries to each one as confirmative evidence of the right to export them and of the payment of the export tax. In consequence each tapestry bears two seals, without which they would not have been allowed to leave Italy.

They are in first class order, have never been mutilated in any way, and are in the same condition, excepting some trifling repairs, as when they issued originally from the united ateliers of Leyniers and Rydams.

They were woven as above shown in the united ateliers of two of the most celebrated families of tapestry weavers that Flanders ever produced; they are full of sentiment and strong in character; the principal personages are in general exceedingly well drawn and magnificently costumed, and they possess their original borders. Judith and Holofernes are personified in almost all with a surprising fidelity to the Apochryphal record of their character and acts as printed in the early editions of the Old Testament.

They are particularly remarkable for the wonderful preservation of their colors as well as for the exquisite delicacy and harmony of those colors. There are no vivid tones, no jarring of colors and the eyes are delighted with the beautiful manner in which the latter were originally blended and by the softening effects of time upon them.

The best perspective results in tapestries were obtained by the introduction of architectural features, and the creators of this series were thoroughly alive to this fact. The best decorative effects in some tapes-

tries were obtained by the introduction of such backgrounds as would throw out in fine relief the figures and costumes of the principal personages, to which fact also the creators of this series were fully alive.

In some of the Judith and Holofernes tapestries the backgrounds are draperies, in others they are tent walls, in still others fortification walls or architectural motives, and the surprising relief obtained by these backgrounds greatly increases our admiration and respect for the master weavers in whose united ateliers these eight tapestries originated.

In conclusions they are splendid specimens of Flemish tapestries of the last half of the seventeenth century, for they possess a wealth of decorative qualities which give them a wonderfully sumptuous effect, and they were woven while Flanders stoutly maintained her struggle for leadership with France and before the wiser laws and better pay of the French monarchs had robbed her of many of her best weavers and had ended her three centuries of proud pre-eminence as the greatest and grandest center of tapestry weaving in the world.

HISTORY OF THE SUBJECTS

The following history of Judith and Holofernes is partly quoted and partly compiled from the "Book of Judith" as printed in the Apochrypha.

Judith was a beautiful Jewish widow and a model of piety, courage, chastity and wisdom.

Holofernes was a savage instrument of the King of Babylon and carried war, desolation and misery into many countries.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (called King of Assyria in the Apochrypha), sent envoys to "all inhabitants of the land" commanding them to join his standards in a war against Arphaxad. As Nebuchadnezzar was unknown to several of the kings who received his command, they laughed at his mandate and treated his ambassadors with contempt. Enraged at their "contumeliousness," he "swore by his throne and kingdom that he would avenge himself by destroying all flesh that did not obey the commandments of his mouth," and sent for Holofernes, the chief captain of his army, who knelt before him to receive his orders and above whom he extended his sceptre. (*See the first tapestry.*

It was a law among the Medes and Persians that every one summoned into the monarch's presence over whom he did not extend his sceptre should be put to death.

The orders which he delivered to his Chief Captain began with the words, "Thus saith the great King, the

The Second Tapestry.

HOLOFERNES ORDERING THE ARREST OF ACHIOR.

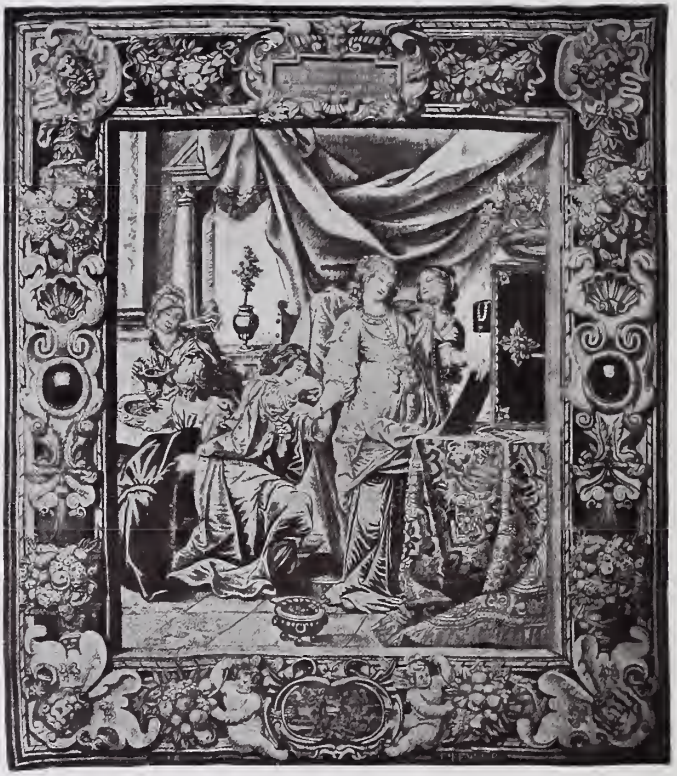
Lord of the whole earth," and after commanding Holofernes to lay waste the lands of those who resisted and to destroy the inhabitants thereof, they terminated with the threat, "and take thou heed, that thou transgress none of the commandments of thy Lord."

Holofernes began carrying out these terrible orders with savage ferocity. On nearing the confines of Judea he decreed that he came "to destroy all the gods of the land, that all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar only, and that all tongues and tribes should call upon him as God." The children of Israel "were troubled for Jerusalem and for the temple of the Lord their God," but they courageously gathered together their warriors, fortified their villages and placed guards at the narrow passes into the valleys of Judea. Their resistance enraged Holofernes to frenzy. He summoned the "princes of Moab and the captains of Ammon," and demanded, "Who are these people; what is the multitude of their army; wherein is their power and strength; what king is set over them, or who is captain of their army?" Achior, the Ammonite, attempted to enlighten him, and recited the history of the Jews, traced their wanderings with his finger upon a map, and declared that "if there be any error in this people, and they sin against their God, we shall overcome them, but if there be no iniquity in their nation, let my lord now pass by, lest their Lord defend them and we become a reproach before all the world."

Holofernes, flaming with anger at the implication of a possible defeat of his army, ordered that Achior be seized, bound and delivered to the Jews, so that he might perish with the people he presumed invincible. (*See the second tapestry.*)

The next day Holofernes surrounded Bethulia, the first fortified city of the Jews, and took possession of the fountains and wells, upon which the people depended for water. At the expiration of thirty-four days, the beleagured citizens having exhausted their cisterns, assembled and demanded that their chief Ozias, should surrender the city to Holofernes. He bade them keep up their courage for five days longer and made an oath that if no help came from the Lord within that time he would accede to their prayers. When Judith heard of the demands of the people and the reply of Ozias, she sent for him and for "Chabris and Charmis, the ancients of the city," and said: "Oh, ye governors of Bethulia, the words ye have spoken before the people this day are not right, touching this oath which ye have made to deliver the city to our enemies in five days unless within these days the Lord turn to help us. He hath power to defend us when He will, even every day, or to destroy us before our enemies. Therefore let us wait for salvation of Him and call upon Him to help us and He will hear our voice if it please Him." She arraigned them in forcible language and practically showed them that their vices outweighed their virtues. (*See the third tapestry.*)

She could not determine them to follow her counsels, for Ozias speaking for all, replied: "There is none to gainsay thy wisdom, all the people know thy understanding, but the oath we have taken we will not break; therefore pray thou that the Lord will send rain to fill our cisterns." To which Judith answered: "I will do a thing which shall go throughout all generations to the children of our nation. Stand ye by the gates this night and I will go forth with my waiting-



The Fourth Tapestry.

THE TOILET OF JUDITH.

woman, and within the days that ye have promised to deliver our city to our enemies the Lord will visit Israel by my hand." Ozias and the princes responded: "Go in peace, and the Lord God be before thee and take vengeance on our enemies." Thereupon Judith humbled herself and appealed to the Lord for help against the Assyrians and closed her prayer with the words "give into my hands the power that I have conceived, smite by the deceit of my lips their prince, and break down their stateliness by the hand of a woman."

She then called her maids "who removed the garments of her widowhood, bathed her and anointed her with precious ointment, braided her hair, put a tire upon her head, and clothed her in her garments of gladness. They put sandals upon her feet and decked her with bracelets, chains, rings and all her ornaments, to allure the eyes of all men that should see her." (*See the fourth tapestry.*)

She then gave the maid she had chosen to accompany her a bottle of wine and a bag of provisions and they went forth from the gate of the city toward the camp of Holofernes. As they approached it they were halted by the "first watch of the Assyrians," who asked her, "Of what people art thou"? She answered, "I am a woman of the Hebrews, and am fled from them, for they shall be given you to be consumed. I am come to show your chief captain a way whereby he shall win all the hill country around Bethulia, without losing any of his men." Thereupon, a guard conducted her to the tent of Holofernes, "who rested upon his bed under a canopy, which was woven with purple, and gold, and emeralds, and precious stones." When Judith came before him he marvelled at her beauty and "she fell

upon her knees and did reverence unto him, and his guards lifted her up." (*See the fifth tapestry.*)

He asked her, "Wherefore art thou fled from thy people, and art come unto us? None shall hurt thee, but entreat thee well." To which she answered, "If thou wilt follow the words of thy handmaid, God will deliver Israel into thy hands. Achior repeated to us the words which he declared unto thee, and I entreat thee, reject not his advice, for it is true; but the people have naught to eat or drink, and they will lay hands upon their cattle and on all those sanctified things that God hath forbidden them to touch or eat. I, thine handmaid, knowing all this, am fled, and God has sent me to advise thee. Now, therefore, my Lord, I will remain with thee, and thy servant will go out by night into the valley, and pray unto my God, and He will tell me when they have committed these sins, and the same day thou shalt destroy them." Her words pleased Holofernes, and he told her, "There is not such a woman from one end of the earth to the other both for beauty of face and wisdom of words. If thou do as thou hast spoken, thou shalt dwell in the house of Nebuchadnezzar, and shalt be renowned throughout the whole earth." He requested her "to eat of his meats and drink of his wines;" but she replied, "Provision shall be made for me of the things that I have brought, lest I commit an offense." The guard then conducted her to a tent, and before the early morning watch she sent to Holofernes, saying, "Let my Lord now command that thine handmaid may go forth unto prayer." Whereupon he "commanded his guard that they should not stay her," and thus for three nights she went out and in unmolested. On the fourth

The Sixth Tapestry.

BANQUET GIVEN JUDITH BY HOLOFERNES.

day Holofernes "made a feast to his servants only, and called none of the officers to the banquet," but sent Bagoas, the eunuch, to invite Judith to join him.

She obeyed and when she appeared "Holofernes' heart was ravished with her for he waited a time to deceive her." He begged that she would "drink now and be merry with us"; but she "ate and drank before him only what her maid had prepared." (*See the sixth tapestry.*)

"Holofernes took great delight in her, and drank much more wine than he had drunk at any time in one day since he was born." The feast was long and the servants were weary, so "Bagoas dismissed them, and shut the tent from without." * * * "Judith was left alone in the tent and Holofernes lying along his bed, for he was filled with wine. Now Judith had commanded her maid to stand without the tent, for she had said to Bagoas that she would go forth to her prayers as usual."

Alone with the oppressor of her race and kindred, alone with the savage who had desolated whole countries and filled nations with mourning, and that savage in her power—asleep and drunken. She hesitated only long enough to utter a short prayer, then seized the falchion of Holofernes, took hold of his hair, and with two strokes severed his head from his body. She handed the head to her maid, who put it into the bag which had held their provisions; and "they twain went forth together, according to their custom, unto prayer" outside the camp. On arriving before the gate of Bethulia, Judith cried out: "Open, open now the gate; praise God, for he hath not taken away His mercy from the house of Israel, but hath destroyed our ene-

mies by mine hands this night. They opened the gate for her, and when she had entered and mounted the steps of the temple, she took the head out of the bag and showed it, and said unto them: "Behold the head of Holofernes, the Chief Captain of the army of Assur; the Lord hath smitten him by the hand of a woman." * * * "The people were astonished and sang and danced and with glad music praised the Lord."

Ozias with uplifted hand cried: "O daughter, blessed art thou of the most high God above all women upon earth," and Achior fell upon his knees and reverenced her and was converted to Judaism. (*See the seventh tapestry.*)

She then told the soldiers to "Take this head and hang it upon the highest place of your walls, and take ye every one his weapons and go forth out of the city as though ye would go down into the field toward the watch of the Assyrians, but go not down. Upon seeing you they shall go into their camp and raise up the Captains of the army of Assur, and they shall run to the tent of Holofernes, but shall not find him; then fear shall fall upon them and they shall flee before your face."

The soldiers followed her advice; the Assyrians fled as she had presaged; the Israelites pursued them with fearful slaughter, and the immense riches of the army of Holofernes fell into the hands of the Jews. They gave to Judith the tent of Holofernes, all his plate and vessels of gold, and all his rich stuffs and precious stones, and all his treasures. (*See the eighth tapestry.*)

Thomas Bailey Aldrich published a few years ago a narrative poem, entitled "Judith and Holofernes,"

The Eighth Tapestry.

JUDITH RECEIVING THE TREASURES OF HOLOFERNES

which is founded on the Apocrypha, and will prove entertaining reading to any one interested in the subject. He subsequently dramatized the poem under the title "Judith of Bethulia," for Miss Nancy O'Neill, who appeared as Judith at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, in 1904. The dramatization does not follow the lines of the poem nor those of the Apocrypha, for it makes Bagoas an accomplice of Judith by furnishing her with a sleeping drug to put in Holofernes' wine. It also makes Achior a persistent lover of Judith, who followed her to Holofernes' camp where he was arrested and released by Bagoas during the panic caused by the death of Holofernes. It also makes Bagoas accompany Achior to Jerusalem.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BORDERS

They are an integral part of the tapestries and are an important and artistic feature of the series. Tapestries which have been deprived of their original borders have lost many of their virgin charms. In the center of all the top borders is a cartouche, the upper part of which is decorated with the head of a satyr and the lower part with dolphins. In each cartouche is a Latin inscription on a blue ground, which inscription is the title of the composition illustrated beneath it. To the right and left of this cartouche, excepting in the narrow tapestries, are standing eagles with extended wings, and festoons of leaves and fruit. In the center of all the bottom borders is a cartouche which encloses a miniature mythological subject.

To the right and left of this cartouche are winged cherubs and beyond these are bouquets of fruits and leaves.

In all the corners of all the tapestries are cartouches enclosing the mask of a satyr.

In the center of all the side borders is a cartouche enclosing an imitation of a blue stone above which is a shell and beneath which are dolphins' heads.

Above and below this cartouche are bouquets of fruits and leaves. The imitation stone was woven in so that the owner should have a place in which he could put his coat of arms if he so desired, without detracting from the merits of the tapestries. It could easily be cut out and his coat of arms, woven on a small loom, could be deftly inserted in the vacant space.

In the blue band at the bottom of each tapestry is woven the signature of E. Leyniers or that of H. Rydams. In the same band are also woven, sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left of the signature, the mark B B.

The letters stand for Brussels-Brabant. The city of Brussels and the duchy of Brabant at one time formed part of the province of Flanders. The shield stands for the municipal shield of Brussels and it often varies in form. The letters and shield constitute the mark of tapestries which originated in Brussels-Brabant, and which are entitled to rank as antique Flemish tapestries.

In 1528 Charles the Great issued an edict which condemned any weaver to lose his right hand who wove this mark in any tapestry which did not originate in Brussels-Brabant.

INSCRIPTION, SIGNATURE, MARK, AND DESCRIPTION OF EACH TAPESTRY

BEGINNING WITH THE FIRST AND ENDING WITH THE EIGHTH

Latin Inscription.

NABVCHODONOSOR REX HOLOFERNEM PRINCIPEM MILITIAE SVAE ADVERSVS ISRAELEM MITTIT.

Signature—E. LEYNIERS. Mark—B B.

Description.

The first tapestry represents Nebuchadnezzar, seated upon his throne at the entrance of a palace, extending his sceptre over the head of Holofernes, who kneels as he receives the edict which bears the monarch's portrait on its seal, and which commands him, upon forfeit of his life, to kill all those who disobey the king's orders, and to destroy their towns and cities and lay waste their lands. Two officers, no doubt of high degree, stand at the left of the throne, while others of lesser importance and a few soldiers are grouped near its right.

Nebuchadnezzar wears a turban, a crown, a collar of precious stones, a delicately toned tunic with golden lights, and a richly embroidered mantle lined with ermine and which has a wide collar of the same fur.

Holofernes wears a helmet adorned with ostrich plumes, a coat of armor decorated with human masks and a mantle of almost the same color as the tunic of the King. The officer in the right foreground who strokes his beard, wears a long, deep blue coat of velvety cloth with silver lights and an ermine collar. All the principal personages are large in stature and have strong, determined and self-sufficient features which indicate them capable of carrying out the work they have undertaken both ruthlessly and persistently.

Latin Inscription.

ACHIOR DVX AMONITARV ENARRANS DEI ISAELIS POTENTIAM IVSSV HOLOFERNIS CAPITVR.

Signature—H. RYDAMS. Mark—B B.

Description.

The second tapestry represents Achior, Captain of the Ammonites, standing behind a table at the entrance of a tent answering the demands of Holofernes for information concerning the Jews. He points out upon a map the wanderings of this people, recites their history and declares with an arm uplifted to give greater emphasis to his words, that they cannot be conquered so long as they obey the commandments of their Lord. Holofernes, wild with rage at this daring and unexpected declaration, turns his back to the table, points at Achior and orders that he be seized, bound and thrown into Bethulia to perish with its inhabitants. The order is instantly obeyed, for two officers promptly seize the Ammonite Captain. The secondary scene illustrates the balance of the sentence. Achior has been

bound to a tree from which he is being cut loose by a soldier preparatory, no doubt, to being driven into the beleagured city.

The Ammonite Captain is represented in this tapestry, as well as in all the rest in which he appears, as a sedate looking man of serious disposition.

He wears a helmet decorated with three ostrich feathers, a tunic of practically the same tones as the mantle of Holofernes in the preceding tapestry, and a deep blue mantle with silver lights. Holofernes wears a helmet adorned with ostritch plumes, a coat of armor ornamented with human masks and a rich luminous brown mantle gracefully draped around his body and across his shoulders. It is an exciting and fateful council of war and has been interpreted into warp and woof with marvelous skill. The dark brown background of the tent throws out in fine relief the foremost military figures and the helmets, spears and banners of those in the rear. Everyone will note the magnificent costumes of Achior and Holofernes, but none should fail to observe the admirable reproduction of the map, the books and the table cover of an unusual oriental pattern.

Latin Inscription.

IVDITH VIDVA PONDERAT POPVLI VIRTVTES ET VITIA HIS SVPERANTIBVS ISRAEL PVNITVR.

Signature—H. RYDAMS. Mark—B▼B.

Description.

The third tapestry represents Judith metaphorically weighing the virtues and vices of the Jews, at the

entrance of a synagogue and before the Governors of Bethulia. The scales are apparently held up by a hand descending from a cloud. The arrogant attitude of Ozias, the chief Governor, has given way, as she continues her arraignment, to surprise and discomfiture. His pose, his strong and determined features, his heavy beard and his large and bulky frame enveloped in what may be called a salmon-pink robe, give him an imposing and self-sufficient appearance. Charmis, who stands on his left, is the only one of the three Governors who, judging by his downcast eyes and reverent attitude, actually feels and respects the truth of Judith's words. He wears a coat of blue velvety cloth with silver lights which has been interpreted with such excellence that it appears real and the illusion is accentuated by the natural manner with which it drapes his figure. Chabris, who stands on the right of Ozias, has a face which indicates a subordinate and crafty character. Behind the Governors of Bethulia crowd a number of soldiers, carrying spears and a green flag, who strain forward to see all that is going on. In front of the scales stand Judith and Marah, her maid. Judith is dressed in the somber garments of her widowhood and her solemn words are emphasized by the attitude of Marah, who stands behind her with hands clasped in supplication. In the heavier scales, peacock feathers represent vanity; the ram's head, obstinacy; the mask, deceitfulness; the serpent, biting a heart, envy; the bag of money, avarice, and the toad, corruption.

In the lighter scale the anchor represents faith; the sword and balance, justice; the lamb's head, innocence; the roses, purity; the flaming heart, sincerity; the clasped hands, brotherly unity, and the altar-fire, reliance upon God.

In the left middle field is a crowd of men and women in various attitudes of despair. Further back is a section of the walls of the city with a tower full of soldiers, and beyond, upon a high knoll, are a horseman and a foot-soldier on scout duty for the Assyrians.

Latin Inscription.

IVDITH PVLCHERRIMA INDVIT SE VESTIBVS IVCVNDITATIS SVAE VT BETHVLIAM AB EXCIDIO LIBERET.

Signature—E. LEYNIERS. Mark—B B.

Description.

The fourth tapestry represents Judith, assisted by her maids, completing a bewitching toilet, in which she aims to dazzle and enthrall Holofernes. She stands in front of a table near the middle of her boudoir and looks into a small mirror. A kneeling maid fastens a bracelet upon her wrist, another spreads a rich mantle over her shoulders, a third takes a brown dress out of a chest, and Marah, who accompanied her to the camp of the Assyrian general, carries a salver and ewer. On the floor is a brazier containing curling tongs. The table cloth looks like a veritable piece of embroidery of unique and oriental pattern. It was an admirable scheme to stretch drapery across the corner of the boudoir, since it throws out in exquisite relief the vase of flowers, the black jewel case and its open drawer (from which hangs a necklace of pearls) the mirror and the whole toilet scene. The artist weavers have created a lovely feminine Judith whom we would hardly imagine possessed the physical courage to risk more than her life to save her country from destruction.

Latin Inscription.

IVDITH FVGITIVA HOLOFERNEM ASTVTE DECIPIT, ET SPECIOSAM VICTORIAM PROMITTIT.

Signature—H. RYDAMS. Mark—B⛊B.

Description.

The fifth tapestry represents Holofernes seated upon a dais at the entrance to his tent, propped round in Oriental fashion with cushions. Judith kneels at his feet with downcast eyes and both hands clasped upon her breast, while Marah kneels behind her and holds up the train of her mantle. The Assyrian leans forward and proffers a hand as if to assist her to her feet. On the left of the dais are, among other things, his plumed helmet, sword and belt and coat of armor. The two soldiers who have conducted Judith to the tent help her to rise at the command of their chief. Their swarthy features, stalwart frames and picturesque military costumes have been admirably interpreted. There can be no doubt but what they are loyal and valiant soldiers, disciplined to prompt obedience. Although the cunning look in the eyes of Judith and the suppliant features of Marah were not intended to add, which they could not, to the decorative features of the tapestry, yet they carry the conviction that the artist-weavers intended they should interpret in a measure the purpose of the visit. The magnificent mantle worn by Judith, which is evidently the same one a maid is throwing over her shoulders in the preceding tapestry, looks like oriental embroidery, heavily enriched with gold and ornamented around the edges with rows of pearls.

Latin Inscription.

HOLOFERNES EBRIVS A IVDITH CAPITE TRVNCATVR QVAE ITA ISRAELEM SERVAT.

Translation.

Holofernes, while drunken, is deprived of his head by Judith, who thus saves Israel.

Signature—E. LEYNIERS. Mark B B.

Description.

The sixth tapestry represents the banquet offered Judith by Holofernes in his tent while besieging Bethulia. The Assyrian general holds a large crystal and bronze goblet of wine in his right hand and clasps the forearm of the Jewess with his left while she, with a far-away look in her eyes, takes no notice of the act nor of the look with which he insults her. Old Bagoas, his lictor's axe behind him, puts upon the table the viands, cake and fruits handed him by a waiter, while a page in the foreground fills a pitcher with wine. Marah has given Judith a crystal cup of the wine they brought with them, as she refused to eat or drink anything furnished by Holofernes. The table is decorated with a stuffed peacock placed between two tall wax candles, the light from which brilliantly illuminates the rear wall of the tent. Behind the table is seen the casqued head of a soldier. The enamored Holofernes, the indifferent Bagoas, the stolid soldier, the heavy-witted waiter and the busy boy, all speak to us in one direction, while the alarm of Marah and the serenity of Judith in the face of her danger trouble us as would the sight of a lamb in the

jaws of a tiger. It is a pathetic subject superbly illustrated. One remarks with pleasure that the creators of the tapestry represent the actual tragedy, designated in the inscription, in miniature only and in an inconspicuous place.

Latin Inscription.

IVDITH VICTRIX HOLOFERNIS CAPVT POPVLO EXHIBET QVI DEVM ISRAELIS LAVDAT.

Signature—H. RYDAMS. Mark—B B.

Description.

The seventh tapestry represents Judith exhibiting the head of Holofernes, at the entrance of a synagogue to the Governors and people of Bethulia. She holds it aloft in her right hand and points at it with the forefinger of her left, as she utters the words, "Behold the head of Holofernes, the Chief Captain of the army of Assur; the Lord has smitten him by the hand of a woman." Ozias stands a step below the heroine facing the spectator and with his right arm upraised, cries aloud, "O daughter, blessed art thou of the most high God above all women upon earth." Charmis stands behind Ozias and with hands raised in astonishment gazes at the head of the dreaded Assyrian. Achior has doffed his plumed helmet, and kneeling at the feet of Judith, looks up at her with reverence. Marah stands behind her holding the bag in which the head was carried, while another maid holds aloft a closed sun umbrella, and a third holds a bit of drapery beneath the severed head.

The people of Bethulia are wild with joy over their deliverance. One of the two men upon the step behind Ozias blows a horn and the other holds up a branch and crown of laurel. On the ground near the base of the steps several men and women express their joy by dancing while a band of others play upon different kinds of musical instruments, among which are a tambourine, a trumpet and several styles of horns. Others carry warlike banners and flaming torches. In the background is a section of the walls of Bethulia with a tower upon a wooded hill.

Judith wears a greyish robe, a collar, bracelets and waistband of precious stones, and a magnificent mantle which looks like gold brocade of a unique oriental design, bordered round the bottom with triple rows of pearls, and lined with delicately toned silk. Ozias wears a rich salmon-pink robe lined with fur, and Achior a tunic of practically the same tone as the one he wears in the second tapestry, and a luminous blue mantle with silver lights.

Latin Inscription.

DEVS ISRAELIS EXERCITVM HOLOFERNIS FVNDIT, ET MVNERA IVDITH DANTVR.

Signature—E. LEYNIERS. Mark—B▼B.

Description.

The eighth tapestry represents Judith attended by four maids standing upon a platform outside the walls of Bethulia with Ozias, Charmis, Chabris, and their bodyguard on her right, and Achior with his bodyguard on her left. Marah stands behind her and looks

over her shoulder. The maid nearest the spectator stoops at the side of her mistress, holds a small trunk, which is evidently of considerably weight, and with half-turned face looks upward. The next nearest stands behind Judith and leans toward Achior with both arms extended in a gesture of astonishment. At the feet of Judith are piled some of the treasures of Holofernes consisting of plate, precious stones and vessels of gold and silver of various kinds and sizes. In the defile of the mountains on the right, the Jewish army pursue the panic stricken Assyrians. Nearer the front a caravan brings more treasures from the camp, while the men leading it stagger under the weight of their loads of loot, as they climb the hill upon which stand Judith and what may be termed her court. The dark walls and towers of Bethulia form an admirable background to the main scene. The figure of Judith naturally holds the eye longer than that of any of the others. Her look, her mien, and her gestures attest that her heart is so full of thankfulness to the Almighty for the wit and courage vouchsafed her to save her country from destruction that she can pay scant heed to the treasures piled at her feet. Her hair is unbound and falls in ringlets over her shoulders. She wears a greyish robe, a girdle of precious stones and the same sumptuous mantle as in the preceding tapestry.

Ozias turns toward Charmis and judging by his gesture expresses his astonishment that the Assyrian chief possessed such rich and varied treasures. Charmis stands with both hands resting upon the head of his heavy staff, a model of dignity and sobriety. His turban is ornamented with precious stones and his green mantle of velvety cloth contrasts beautifully

with the delicately toned mantle of Ozias. In fact, this contrast of colors throws out the whole figure of Charmis in grand relief. The attitude and gestures of Achior proclaim his adoration of Judith and his wonderment over her miraculous exploits. The contrast of colors in this instance also makes his figure stand out in high relief. He wears a helmet ornamented with ostrich feathers and a blue mantle of velvety material, with silver lights.

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